

## The Politics of Names in *Ulysses* Managing the “Memory of Migrations”

Sometime between early August and late October 1921, Joyce inserted the following enigmatic passage into the first typescript of a recently composed addition to the “Circe” episode of *Ulysses*:

*Leopoldi autem generatio.* Moses begat Noah and Noah begat Eunoch and Eunoch begat O’Halloran and O’Halloran begat Guggenheim and Guggenheim begat Le Hirsch and Le Hirsch begat Jesurum and Jesurum begat MacKay and MacKay begat Ostrolopsy and Ostrolopsy begat Smerdoz and Smerdoz begat Weiss and Weiss begat Schwarz and Schwarz begat Adrianopoli and Adrianopoli begat Aranjuez and Aranjuez begat Lewy Lawson and Lewy Lawson begat Ichabudonosor and Ichabudonosor begat O’Donnell Magnus and O’Donnell Magnus begat Christbaum and Christbaum begat ben Maimun and ben Maimun begat Dusty Rhodes and Dusty Rhodes begat Benamor and Benamor begat Jones-Smith and Jones-Smith begat Savorgnanovich and Savorgnanovich begat Poe and Poe begat Vingtetunieme and Vingtetunieme begat Szombathely and Szombathely begat Virag and Virag begat Bloom et *vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel.* (JJA 15:317)

In the few months remaining before the publication date, 2 February 1922, Joyce changed this passage only slightly, altering “Eunoch” to “Eunuch,” inserting “Agendath” and “Netaim” as forefathers before “Le Hirsch,” and replacing “Poe” with “Jasperstone” (*U* 15.1855–69). These changes did not alter the fact that, within the addition that Joyce called a “messianic scene” (“*une scène messianique*,” *U* 15.1398–1956),<sup>1</sup> this is a rather obvious parody of the opening chapter of the New Testament, in which Christ’s genealogy is traced from Abraham through King David to Joseph the carpenter

(Matthew 1:2–16). Drawing a parallel between Leopold Bloom and Jesus Christ, the Latin phrase introducing this addition, *Leopoldi autem generatio* (“Now Leopold’s generation/birth”), rewrites a well-known phrase from the Gospel according to St. Matthew as it occurs in the Latin translation traditionally used by the Roman Catholic Church, the Vulgate: *Christi autem generatio sic erat* (“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise,” Matthew 1:18).<sup>2</sup> Citing biblical predictions and assertions of the arrival of the Messiah (“*et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel*,” Isaiah 7:14, evoked by Matthew as “*et vocabunt nomen eius Emmanuel*” or “and they shall call his name Emmanuel,” Matthew 1:23), the passage as a whole appropriately reinforces the phantasy, acted out in the Messianic Scene, of Leopold Bloom as the political and economic savior of an independent Ireland, later declared to be the “undoubted emperor-president and king-chairman, the most serene and potent and very puissant ruler of this realm . . . Leopold the First” (*U* 15.1471–73).

The biblical passage also provides Joyce with a useful intertext to introduce a passage preoccupied with naming and migration. Contrasting the zenith of David’s rule with the nadir of captivity in a foreign land, the migration to Babylon (Matthew 1:11, 12, 17) serves in the gospel passage as a powerful symbolic beginning for the salvation story culminating with Jesus. The passage’s problematization of names is, however, linked to another kind of migration. At pains to establish the authentic pedigree of “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1), the Evangelist offers interpretations, also included in later translations, to explain the meaning of the Hebrew names to the Greek-speaking audience of the original gospel: “And thou shalt call his name JESUS: *for he shall save his people from their sins . . . and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us*” (Matthew 1:21, 23, italics added). By so doing, Matthew exposes the first few steps in a long series of linguistic migrations that were to affect biblical names and the texts that contained them.

Implicated in issues of naming and migration, Matthew’s passage is a fitting basis for Joyce’s ludic exploration of the family history of Leopold Bloom. The messianic genealogy of the hero of Joyce’s modern epic is, of course, blatantly unorthodox and unrealistic: in the Bible, Noah preceded Moses, and Enoch—a possible derivative of Enoch from the alternative genealogy of Christ in Luke 3:23–38—was subsequently seriously diminished in his symbolic generative potential when Joyce amended the name to Eunuch. Joyce’s most conspicuous deviation from the biblical precedent is, however, the fact that most names listed after Eunuch appear to be modern

Western-style surnames. This is significant in a number of ways. First, the sheer instability of these names in Joyce's list, changing with each new generation, questions the idea of hereditary "family" names and resonates with Stephen Dedalus's earlier musings about paternity being perhaps "a legal fiction" (*U* 9.844). Second, the geographic origin of these names suggests a rather unlikely history of generations crisscrossing all over Europe (at the least), from Ireland ("O'Halloran") to the Balkans ("Adrianopoli") and from Spain ("Aranjuez") to Hungary ("Szombathely"). It is little wonder, then, that although Claire Culleton rightly emphasized Joyce's "nominal integrity" as part of the "cultural veracity" and verisimilitude of the writer's works,<sup>3</sup> this passage, with its ostensible defiance of historical realism, seems to have rebuffed historicist readings.

Nonetheless, this chapter sets out to demonstrate that the fanciful list of names in Bloom's messianic genealogy can be seen as realistic at a number of deeper levels: as a hyperbole of the story of name changes and migrations within the Bloom family and, as such, as a parallel to the endemic mutability of names and the prevalence of migration in Joyce's Europe. The narrator of the "Ithaca" episode suggests that although Bloom can recall his father telling him about his journey from Hungary to Ireland, time had still partially "obliterated the memory of these migrations in narrator and listener" (*U* 17.1916–17). This chapter proposes, ultimately, a reading of Bloom's genealogy as a way of foregrounding the propensity of names to both obliterate and inscribe memories of migrations.

#### "*Leopoldi autem generatio*": The Virag-Bloom Family Record

While the history of Leopold Bloom's family is by no means exhaustively presented in *Ulysses*, there are a number of passages that look more directly reliable than Bloom's highly unlikely messianic genealogy in "Circe." Apart from scattered references to Bloom's memories of his father reading Hebrew (*U* 7.206–7) and remembering Viennese theatrical performances (5.199), the earliest detailed hints are to be found in "Cyclops," where Martin Cunningham volunteers the following information regarding Bloom: "He is a perverted jew . . . from a place in Hungary and it was he drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system. . . . His name was Virag, the father's name that poisoned himself. He changed it by deedpoll, the father did" (12.1635–41). Bloom's somewhat exotic roots and the change of the family name from the surname Virag (from the Hungarian word for "flower," *virág*) are later rather dubiously confirmed through the spectral

appearance and insistent presence of grandfather “Virag Lipoti, of Szombathely” in “Circe” (15.2312). The name change subsequently becomes a recurring motif in “Ithaca,” a chapter that reminds the reader at least seven times that Bloom’s father, Rudolph, was earlier called Virag.<sup>4</sup> The first of these reminders occurs, in fact, as part of an inchoate genealogy of Bloom, according to which he is the “only born male transubstantial heir of Rudolf Virag (subsequently Rudolph Bloom) of Szombathely, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, London and Dublin and of Ellen Higgins, second daughter of Julius Higgins (born Karoly) and Fanny Higgins (born Hegarty)” (17.534–37). This account of Bloom’s immediate ancestry is corroborated by two further passages in the same episode. The first of these provides material evidence for Virag Rudolf’s name change by quoting the full text of a “local presscutting concerning change of name by deedpoll” (17.1866–7), kept safe in the second drawer of Bloom’s desk:

I, Rudolph Virag, now resident at no 52 Clanbrassil street, Dublin, formerly of Szombathely in the kingdom of Hungary, hereby give notice that I have assumed and intend henceforth upon all occasions and at all times to be known by the name of Rudolph Bloom. (17.1869–72)

A page or two later, Rudolf Virag’s gradual progress from mid-nineteenth-century Hungary through Austria, Italy, England, and finally Ireland is reaffirmed through Bloom’s childhood memories:

Rudolph Bloom (deceased) narrated to his son Leopold Bloom (aged 6) a retrospective arrangement of migrations and settlements in and between Dublin, London, Florence, Milan, Vienna, Budapest, Szombathely with statements of satisfaction (his grandfather having seen Maria Theresia, empress of Austria, queen of Hungary), with commercial advice (having taken care of pence, the pounds having taken care of themselves). Leopold Bloom (aged 6) had accompanied these narrations by constant consultation of a geographical map of Europe (political) . . . (17.1905–13)

Albeit atypical for the average Dubliner of 1904, Leopold Bloom’s genealogy, as suggested here in the “Ithaca” episode, looks realistic enough. It is all the more surprising, then, that it appears to dovetail with the ostensibly unrealistic, mock-biblical genealogy presented in “Circe” in a number of crucial points. The striking instability of family names of the earlier genealogy is reinforced here, as not only all female ancestors but also all male ancestors mentioned in “Ithaca” appear to have undergone a name change

during their lifetimes. It is hardly surprising that Bloom's mother, Ellen Higgins, and maternal grandmother, Fanny Hegarty, assumed their husbands' respective surnames on marriage. More unusual is the fictional fact that both Bloom's father, Rudolf Virag, and his maternal grandfather, Julius Karoly, changed their Hungarian surnames (*Virág* and *Károly*, the latter being Hungarian for "Charles") to names that fit more smoothly into an Anglo-Irish environment.

What the text of *Ulysses* does not spell out is that these official name changes were preceded by a number of previous steps of assimilation to the Dublin environment: in addition to reversing the order of their family and given names, Hungarian-born Virág Rudolf and Károly Gyula (possibly Rudolf Virág and Julius Károly in German-language Austrian documents) appear to have tacitly translated their first names from Hungarian (Rudolf, Gyula) or German (Rudolf, Julius) to English equivalents (Rudolph, Julius). Furthermore, they have shed the Hungarian diacritic accents featuring in their last names (*Virág* and *Károly*), thus assimilating to the English alphabet as well. Joyce did pay attention to seemingly minor orthographic details such as the difference between the Hungarian and German spelling "Rudolf" and the English version "Rudolph": in "Ithaca," the variant "Rudolf" is clearly contrasted to "Rudolph" four times. (Similarly, the Austrian empress Maria Theresa is evoked in the Bloom family history through her German name, Maria Theresia.) In addition, as I argue in more detail in chapter 3, the Irish writer was also clearly sensitive if not to the correct orthographic use, then at least to the symbolic potential of diacritics: the Hungarian diacritic ousted from *Virág* returns with a vengeance as part of the manifold nationalistic symbolism of "Cyclops," in the name of the Hungarian delegate of the Friends of the Emerald Island, "Countess Marha Virága Kisászony Putrápesthi" (*U*22 294; cf. *U* 12.560–61), in Bloom's Hungarian persona of "Nagyaságos Uram Lipóti Virag" (*U*22 328; cf. *U* 12.1816), and in the final, emphatically Hungarian farewell to Bloom, "*Visszontlátásra, kedvés barátom! Visszontlátásra!*" (*U*22 828; *U* 12.1841).<sup>5</sup>

While they may not, at first sight, seem too typical for early-twentieth-century Dubliners, these processes—the adjustments of both first and last names and of name orthography to the dominant culture—are realistic and much attested consequences of migration. This changeability of names in Bloom's male ancestry is paralleled and made more visible by the variety of names applied to Bloom by himself and others. These include Henry Flower (*U* 5.62 and *passim*), "O'Bloom, the son of Rory" (*U* 12.216), Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft (*U* 12.468), Senhor Enrique Flor (*U*

12.1288), Ahasuerus (*U* 12.1667), Lipóti Virag (*U* 12.1816), James Lovebitch (*U* 15.1016), Bluebeard, Ikey (*U* 15.1040), Leopold M'Intosh, Higgins (*U* 15.1561–62), Ruby Cohen (*U* 15.2967), Henri Fleury (*U* 15.3003), *L. Boom* (*U* 16.1260), Old Ollebo, M. P. (*U* 17.409), and Mrs. L. Bloom (*U* 17.1822).

Confronted with such onomastic multiplicity, critics have sought various explanations. For Shari and Bernard Benstock, the root of the phenomenon lies in textual genesis, spiced with authorial naughtiness: “The mutation of names throughout the Joyce canon is a phenomenon that derives directly from Joyce’s basic methods of composition: duplication, accretion, modification, comic variation, and ironic juxtaposition. To these can be added a touch of mystification.”<sup>6</sup> For Ira Nadel, mutability makes names nearly meaningless in Joyce’s novel: “Name changes become so prevalent in *Ulysses* that names almost lose significance.”<sup>7</sup> In contrast, this chapter argues that while it is impossible to reduce Joyce’s name games to a single unambiguous meaning, it is precisely their changeability that foregrounds our expectations and attitudes regarding names and thus calls for interpretation in *Ulysses*. From among the many possible interpretive routes, this chapter opts for historical contextualization. In particular, the following sections explore how the multiplicity of Bloom’s names and of the messianic genealogy can be more than inevitable facets of a Homeric mock-epic or of Joyce’s writing habits and can be historically meaningful in Joyce’s fictional universe—as well as beyond it, in Joyce’s Europe.

### “Virag begat Bloom”: Jewish Name Changes

One of the more-often-explored historical contexts for the instability of names in Bloom’s family is the Jewish one. Discussing Bloom’s background, Ira Nadel evokes the complexities of the situation of German Jewry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, caught in the double bind of assimilation to the dominant culture and of rejection by it, complicated by “the acculturated German Jew’s hatred of the Eastern European ghetto Jew.” In particular, Nadel suggests a connection between the name change of the Virags and the “practice of changing Jewish sounding names” as a “disguised but none the less telling example of Jewish self-hatred.”<sup>8</sup> He also repeats John Henry Raleigh’s conjecture regarding Julius Karoly’s Jewish origin and the surmise that Karoly was “a Hungarian name that itself was most likely changed from a Jewish one, or, more precisely, purchased since at that time Jews were forced to give up their names and pay for new ones.”<sup>9</sup> Following Nadel, Claire Culleton interprets “this sort of nominal

trafficking [as] . . . simonious” and detects an uneasiness in Bloom, based on his awareness that his surname, having been changed, is “no real name” but a fraud.<sup>10</sup> Austin Briggs finds in Jewish-looking names emblems of the general indeterminacy of Joycean names, demonstrating that the name of a character like Bella Cohen could just as easily refer to Irish origins as to Jewish ones.<sup>11</sup>

Although the following sections will not always support every detail of these arguments, the importance of the Jewish context is hardly deniable: the text of *Ulysses* contains a number of clues linking Jewishness to onomastic multiplicity and uncertainty. Among these is the implication that Rudolf Virag’s change of name was roughly contemporaneous with another strong symbolic act of Jewish assimilation to a Christian environment: religious conversion. In “Ithaca,” we learn that “Rudolf Virag (later Rudolph Bloom) had been converted from the Israelitic faith and communion in 1865 by the Society for promoting Christianity among the jews)” to “the Irish (protestant) church” (*U* 17.1636–39). As his wife, Ellen, is never referred to as Ellen Virag and as the birth of his son Leopold was registered in 1866 under the surname Bloom (5.198–9, 17.1855), it seems likely that Rudolf Virag’s change of name followed closely on his conversion in 1865 and preceded his subsequent marriage and the birth of his son.

*Ulysses* contains at least two further textual hints linking the multiplicity of names to Jewishness. The less conspicuous of these is at the beginning of “Ithaca,” where one of Leopold Bloom’s Jewish friends is referred to as “Julius (Juda) Mastiansky” (17.58). Here, the parenthetic construction may be the echo of the long-standing practice in many Jewish communities, certainly in Germany and Eastern Europe, of having different given names for secular purposes and for synagogue use: often similar in sound or meaning, secular names (*kinuyim*; here: Julius) would be used generally and chosen to fit into the dominant culture, whereas “secret” sacred names (*shemot ha-kodesh*; here: Juda) could follow Jewish traditions more freely and often derive from Hebrew.<sup>12</sup>

Connected to the ideas of multiplicity and secrecy is the sense that a variety of names implies duplicity. This is clearly implied by the narrator of the “Cyclops” episode as he retells the case of an allegedly Jewish con man:

One of the bottlenosed fraternity it was went by the name of James Wought alias Saphiro alias Spark and Spiro, put an ad in the papers saying he’d give a passage to Canada for twenty bob. What? Do you see any green in the white of my eye? Course it was a bloody barney.